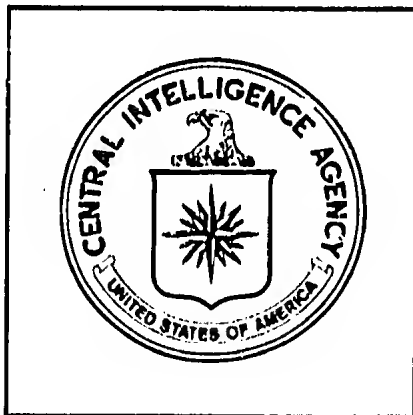


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STAFF NOTES:

Soviet Union Eastern Europe

25X1

Top Secret

158 25X1

April 24, 1975

SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE



25X1

CONTENTS

April 24, 1975

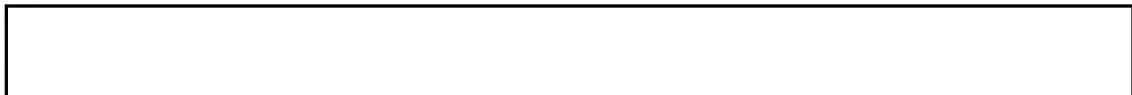
Ceausescu in Damascus. 1



25X1

**'Grechko Makes Partial Retraction
on Yugoslavia's World War II Role. 3**

**Tirana Joins
Moscow's Balkan Critics. 5**



25X1

Recent Shifts in Party Secretaries 7



25X1

Ceausescu in Damascus

Romanian President Ceausescu's sudden arrival in Damascus yesterday suggests that Bucharest is pushing hard for a seat at the Geneva talks on the Middle East and for closer association with important non-aligned countries. Ceausescu will go to Cairo today before returning to Bucharest.

The trip, which was not announced beforehand, comes on the heels of Ceausescu's two-week sojourn to the Far East, Jordan and Tunisia. It keeps Romania in the international spotlight and reaffirms Bucharest's balanced foreign policy at a time of growing tensions with Moscow. The Romanians have in the past offered both the Arabs and Israelis their good offices for settling the Mideast dispute, but Bucharest does not aspire to play the role of mediator.

25X1

25X1

April 24, 1975

-1-

Grechko Makes Partial Retraction
on Yugoslavia's World War II Role

The continued complaints in Belgrade about the Soviet interpretation of the course of World War II have prompted a partial retraction from the Soviet military establishment. At a military conference in Moscow commemorating the victory in Europe, Defense Minister Grechko gave special credit to the Yugoslav people and army for their contribution, placing them ahead of the Polish and Czechoslovak military forces, who also fought alongside the Soviet army "from the very start of the war" and in an entirely different league from the Bulgarian, Romanian, and Hungarian military units who joined the struggle only "toward the end of the war."

Earlier this month Grechko had written an article which Belgrade charged had belittled the Yugoslav war-time role. Moscow showed its willingness to cool the dispute by printing a lengthy article in *Izvestia* praising Tito and his partisans on the eve of Yugoslav Premier Bijedic's visit to the USSR in mid-April. During the visit, Soviet Premier Kosygin added his voice to the Soviet tribute, and similar language appeared in the communique on Bijedic's departure. The Yugoslavs have privately dismissed these Soviet gestures, however, as "bilateral words" and have made clear that Soviet behavior was still suspect.

Yugoslav leaders have characterized the Soviet interpretation of the war not as an historical exercise, but as an attempt to justify present and future policies. In speeches subsequent to the Grechko remarks in Moscow, the Yugoslavs have openly asserted that those who claim to have liberated Yugoslavia are actually saying that they have a right to the country and a right to return. Neither side is ready to launch an extended open polemic, but the issues are too central for either to

April 24, 1975

avoid. For this reason the Soviets will probably continue to argue the primacy of Soviet interest in the area, but indirectly through pliable allies such as the Bulgarians, and Belgrade will continue to rebut them in statements ostensibly addressed to Sofia. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

April 24, 1975

-4-

25X1

Tirana Joins Moscow's Balkan Critics

Albania has joined Romania and Yugoslavia in criticizing Moscow's preparations for celebration of the 30th anniversary of VE Day.

On April 21, a lengthy article in the Albanian party daily condemned Soviet attempts to belittle the partisan war effort in Eastern Europe during World War II. "In those difficult days of the Moscow battle, of the siege of Leningrad, of the resistance of Stalingrad..." the article states, "the Soviet army was well aware that in the mountains of Albania, Yugoslavia, and Greece, the plains of France and the Norwegian fiords, (thousands) laid down their lives in order to make it easier for the Soviet Army...." The paper then accused Moscow of glorifying the past in order to inflate the importance of the Soviet war machine.

The article is the most recent example of Albania's efforts to move out of its largely self-imposed isolation. Tirana has become increasingly willing to identify itself with the views of its Balkan neighbors, particularly when those views are critical of the Soviets.

25X1

April 24, 1975

-5-

Recent Shifts in Party Secretaries

Now that the 25th CPSU Congress has been set for February 24, 1976, the pace of changes in important party positions at the republic and oblast level can be expected to pick up. Following are the changes at the first and second secretary level that we have identified since January 1 of this year. Other such round-ups will be published as new changes are announced.

Azerbaijan:

January 8, 1975 Nikolay Ivanovich Volodin, 2nd secretary of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, was transferred to other work and was replaced by V. A. Bogoslovskiy.

Georgia:

January 7, 1975 Nodar Amvrosiyevich, 2nd secretary of the Adzhar ASSR, was appointed Minister of Agriculture GSSR, and was replaced by O. V. Melkadze (formerly 1st secretary, Batumi Gorkom).

January 7, 1975 Aleksandr Dursunovich Tkhyilaishvili, 1st secretary of the Adzhar ASSR, was retired on pension, and was replaced by V. R. Papunidze (promoted from secretary within the obkom).

January 19, 1975 Valerian Osmanovich Kobakhiya, 1st secretary of the Abkhaz ASSR, was transferred to other work, and was replaced by V. M. Khintba.

April 14, 1975 Albert Nikitovich Churkin, 2nd secretary of Georgia, was removed for flagrant errors and shortcomings committed in his work, and was replaced by Gennadiy Vasilyevich Kolbin (formerly 2nd secretary, Sverdlovsk obkom). Churkin is a candidate member of the CC/CPSU.

April 24, 1975

Kazakhstan:

February 5, 1975 Aleksandr Filippovich Klinkov, 2nd secretary of Alma Ata Oblast, was retired on pension and was replaced by I. I. Dorokhov (promoted from secretary within the obkom).

April 2, 1975 Orazaly Abilovich Kozybayev, 2nd secretary of Kustanay Oblast, was transferred to other work and was replaced by Shangerey Zh. Zhanybekov (former 1st secretary, Kustanay Gorkom).

April 10, 1975 Shapet Kospanovich Kospanov, 1st secretary of the Uralsk Oblast, was transferred to other work and was replaced by Mustakhim Belyalovich Iksanov (former secretary CC, Kazakh CP). Kospanovich is a full member of the CC/CPSU. Iksanov is on the Central Auditing Commission.

RSFSR:

February 25, 1975 Aleksandr Nikitovich Gulchenko, 2nd secretary of Primorye Kraykom, was appointed USSR Deputy Minister of Fish Industry, and was replaced by Nikolay I. Malkov (formerly 1st secretary Vladivostok Gorkom).

February 27, 1975 Gennadiy Nikolayevich Kiselev, 1st secretary of Chukotsk National Okrug, was appointed Secretary of Magadan Obkom, and no replacement has been identified yet.

February 27, 1975 Boris Vladimirovich Smirnov, 2nd secretary of Magadan Oblast, was elected Chairman of the Oblast Trade Union Council and replaced by Aleksandr Dmitriyevich Bogdanov (promoted from secretary within the obkom).

April 14, 1975 Gennadiy Vasilyevich Kolbin, 2nd secretary of Sverdlovsk Oblast, was appointed 2nd secretary CC CP of Georgia, and no replacement has been identified yet.

April 24, 1975

Turkmenistan:

April 10, 1975 Vasiliiy Nazarovich Rykov, 2nd secretary of Turkmenistan, was appointed USSR Ambassador to Algeria, and was replaced by Viktor Mikhaylovich Pereudin (former Chairman, Committee of People's Control). Rykov is a full member of the CC/CPSU.

Ukraine:

April 13, 1975 Vasiliiy Vlasovich Rychko, 2nd secretary of Cherkassy Oblast, was transferred to other work, and was replaced by Yu. D. Krushinskiy (formerly Inspector, CC CP of Ukraine).

April 13, 1975 Vasiliiy Spiridonovich Vednikov, 2nd secretary of Nikolayev Oblast, was transferred to other work and was replaced by N. P. Zemlyanoy (promoted from secretary within the obkom).

25X1

April 24, 1975

-9-

25X1